

VZCZCXRO9540
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHAS #0107 0301745
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 301745Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6971
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE 6641
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY IMMEDIATE 1830
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE 0849
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE IMMEDIATE 1709
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ALGIERS 000107

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2024

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KPAO](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [KMSG](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: ALGERIA SCANDAL: LOCAL REACTIONS, EAC ACTIONS

REF: ALGIERS 106

Classified By: Ambassador David D. Pearce; reasons 1.4 (b, d and g).

11. (S/NF) As of Friday afternoon, January 30, there has been effectively no Algerian public reaction to the January 28 ABC News story (reftel). This could change in days to come depending on media coverage and government response. Initial government response, per reftel, has been restrained. We have received numerous press inquiries from Algerian and international news outlets, and we expect the story to receive heavy coverage in the January 31 print media, as newspapers do not publish on Fridays and the story broke too late in the day on January 28 to make the January 29 Algerian press. The story has not aired on Algerian state-controlled television, nor would it without government approval. It has also received very little coverage so far on pan-Arab satellite networks Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera. State-controlled mosque sermons at midday prayers on Friday, January 30, mentioned neither the story nor the U.S. The Hydra police chief told us on January 30 he was aware of the story, but said that it "does not change our relationship" or cooperation related to the security of Embassy facilities and personnel.

12. (S/NF) On January 29, Ambassador convened a meeting of Emergency Action Committee members, including A/DCM (P/E chief), GRPO, RSO and PAO. The group reviewed the breaking ABC news report and Department guidance for meetings with Algerian officials in both government and security liaison channels. Results of those initial government contacts were reported reftel. A/DCM, as EAC chair, and RSO followed up separately and repeatedly throughout January 29 and 30 with EAC members from MGT, CONS, MSG and DAO as post kept its security posture under continuous review. RSO sent out several SMS alerting all staff to keep a low profile, maintain personal security, and reminding all Mission personnel of the importance of staying vigilant, reporting any suspicious activities immediately. The MSG Detachment has been on alert, and keeping a record of all incoming phone inquiries, passing relevant media information to the PAO. PAO has the lead on all press and public inquiries. We have been in contact with Algerian government officials several times on January 29 and with the MFA on the morning of January 30. During the afternoon of January 29, we exercised the Embassy cascade emergency phone tree, also transmitting instructions to ensure that section heads had all American and local staff accounted for and reachable in an emergency.

13. (S/NF) We will convene a full EAC meeting the afternoon of January 31, to review the Saturday press coverage and assess its impact. Currently, RSO and GRPO report no specific threat information against the Embassy, American staff or

American interests. Ambassador has called on the Minister-Delegate of Defense, phoned the Director-General of the Americas and transmitted our cleared guidance to both (reftel). PAO has alerted all PD LES on strictly passing all inquiries to the PAO, and PD LES have been monitoring local and pan-Arab media throughout the Algerian weekend. Ambassador sent out a brief message (also transmitted by email to NEA/MAG) to the entire Embassy community on Thursday evening, which will greet all staff when they begin the work week on the morning of January 31.

¶4. (S/NF) Our next step is to assess the Algerian public response following the expected press coverage on January 31.

The Hydra police chief confirmed to RSO that any assistance needed to support the Embassy in the immediate future will be made available. As of late afternoon on January 30, the Algerian public had seen very little of the story, and given its absence from Friday mosque sermons and Algerian television, the government seems content to keep it that way and avoid arousing popular passion. The official reaction, from the Defense Ministry to the MFA and local police, continues to reflect appreciation for the guidance we have provided and a shared desire not to let the story have a negative impact on our bilateral relationship.

¶5. (U) Points of contact for this cable are RSO Kevin Whitson and A/DCM Mark Schapiro.

PEARCE